

0053810-091598
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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of automatically determining a peak level of a
2 signal propagated on a carrier medium, the method including the steps
3 of:
4
5 detecting a traversal of a noise threshold level, determined
6 relative to a noise signal, by a data signal;
7
8 determining whether the data signal traverses a peak level
9 within a predetermined time interval after the detection of
10 the traversal of the noise threshold level; and
11
12 varying the peak level in accordance with the determination
13 whether the data signal traversed the peak level.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of varying includes
2 the step of lowering the peak level in the absence of a traversal of the
3 peak level by the data signal within the predetermined time interval.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of varying includes
2 the step of raising the peak level if a traversal of the peak level by the data
3 signal is detected within the predetermined time interval.

1 4. The method of claim 1 including the steps of detecting
2 further traversals of the noise threshold level by the data signal,
3 determining whether the data signal traverses the peak level within the
4 predetermined time interval after the detection of each of the traversals
5 of the noise threshold, and varying the peak level by progressively
6 smaller increments in accordance with the determination as to whether
7 the data signal traverses the peak level within the predetermined time
8 interval.

1 5. Apparatus for automatically determining a peak level of a
2 signal propagated on a carrier medium, the apparatus including:

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4 a first comparator to detect a traversal of a noise threshold
5 level, determined relative to a noise signal, by a data signal;

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7 a second comparator to detect whether the data signal
8 traverses a peak level within a predetermined time interval
9 after the detection of the traversal of the noise threshold
10 level; and

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peak logic to vary the peak level in accordance with the
 detection of whether the data signal traversed the peak
 level.

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6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the peak logic lowers the
 peak level in the absence of a traversal of the peak level by the data signal
 within the predetermined time interval.

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7. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the peak logic raises the
 peak level if a traversal of the peak level by the data signal is detected
 within the predetermined time interval.

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8. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the first comparator
 detects further traversals of the noise threshold level by the data signal,
 the second comparator detects whether the data signal traverses the peak
 level within the predetermined time interval after the respective
 detections of each of the traversals of the noise threshold, and the peak
 logic varies the peak level by progressively smaller increments in
 accordance with the detection of whether the data signal traverses the
 peak level within the predetermined time interval.

1 9. Apparatus for automatically determining a peak level of a
2 signal propagated on a carrier medium, the apparatus including:
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4 first means for detecting a traversal of a noise threshold
5 level, determined relative to a noise signal, by a data signal;
6
7 second means for detecting whether the data signal traverses
8 a peak level within a predetermined time interval after the
9 detection of the traversal of the noise threshold level; and
10
11 third means for varying the peak level in accordance with
12 the detection of whether the data signal traversed the peak
13 level.

1 10. A machine-readable medium storing a sequence of
2 instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to
3 perform the steps of:
4
5 detecting a traversal of a noise threshold level, determined
6 relative to a noise signal, by a data signal propagated on a
7 carrier medium;
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9 detecting whether the data signal traverses a peak level
10 within a predetermined time interval after the detection of
11 the traversal of the noise threshold level; and
12
13 varying the peak level in accordance with the detection
14 whether the data signal traversed the peak level.